



EIMOUR MOKTA

DOE/PHRI Special Medical Care Program in the Republic of the Marshall Islands

*Copy given to
Denny
1-2-03*

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June 17, 2003

Mr. Steven V. Cary
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Health Studies
EH-6/270 Corporate Square Building
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, DC 20585-0270

Dear Steve:

I was glad we had a chance to talk at the DOE/RMI meeting in San Francisco. I met with the DOE/PHRI staff today and feel it is important that we reaffirm the cooperative nature of this program. At the direction of DOE, we cut our budget for the Year 5 Extension Period (July 1, 2003 - June 30, 2004) with the understanding that all the groups operating under the DOE in the RMI had to make similar cuts.

Before the San Francisco meeting, we were informed that the \$200,000 funding cuts were already completed, that they were made to all RMI/DOE programs, and that the money that was cut was to be used in other U.S. government departments. At the meeting in San Francisco, however, we found out, in a response to Senator Hiroshi Yamamura, that the medical program was the only RMI/DOE program that underwent a financial cut. Also, we found out that the monies were being redirected to cover future medical referrals, i.e., the funds stayed within RMI DOE programs.

The success of this program depends on our working together in an open and collaborative manner. We are committed to this. Certainly if your office felt that decreasing resident involvement or using volunteer physicians was a smarter and better way to do business, we should have addressed those issues directly. The scenario of being told that there was an absolute reduction across all DOE/RMI programs and that

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the best method to meet that reduction is to decrease resident participation and utilize volunteer physicians is not helpful.

Please note that none of the RMI Senators, Mayors, or Representatives complained, about resident physicians or about the lack of specialists. As you are aware, they are very articulate about what their constituency likes and does not like about the medical program. If there were concerns we certainly would hear about them.

Thanks for your time, Steve. We wish to work in a true collaborative and well-informed manner. We certainly will address the concerns your office has as best we can and are committed to working as a team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Neal".

Neal A. Palafox, MD, MPH
Principal Investigator